Good afternoon everyone,

I’m Emily’s dad, and I can’t tell you how proud I am to say that. Seeing my daughter here today as Mrs Carter-Hughes—well, that’s a sentence that brings a lump to my throat and a smile I can’t quite hide.

I still remember the evening Emily first mentioned a chap from her London book club. She came home with a tote bag so heavy it looked like it contained every novel ever printed, and said, “Dad, there’s this Oliver who insisted on carrying it for me.” I thought: that’s either a very strong man—or a very good one.

Five years on, I know it’s both. From that first date to your first holiday in the Lake District, you’ve built a life in these lovely, steady steps. You adopted Miso, the cat who I’m convinced believes he owns the Greenwich flat you bought. And then there was that sunrise on Tower Bridge—Oliver, down on one knee as the city woke up around you. Emily said yes, and the world somehow felt exactly right.

Emily, you’ve always been determined and kind—quietly brave, fiercely loyal, the person who rolls up her sleeves and gets it done while making sure everyone else is all right. Oliver, you are dependable and witty—thoughtful, unflappable, and the man who can make an entire table laugh while keeping Emily’s hand in yours.

I’ve watched you cook new recipes together, argue merrily about whether the coriander should be chopped finer, and then share the last spoonful as if it were a treaty. I’ve seen you wander art galleries, heads tilted in the same way, finding the same favourite painting. And I’ve seen you set off on weekend cycles, two bright dots moving in the same direction, never far apart.

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Over many family dinners, Oliver, I've learned what kind of partner you are. The way you look at Emily when she's talking about something that matters to her; the way you make space for her strength; the way you bring lightness exactly when it's needed. There's a father's quiet test that no one mentions: do I feel at ease when I leave my daughter in your care? With you, Oliver, the answer has always been yes.

And Emily, my love, you will always be my little girl—the one who read late under the duvet and believed stories could shape the world. You found a man who carries the heavy bag without being asked, who gets up before dawn for a promise, and who laughs with you on the days when nothing goes to plan. You chose well. You chose each other.

Here's what I wish for you both: may your home be full of the smell of something delicious on the hob, a scattering of gallery tickets on the dresser, tyre marks from another Sunday ride, and a cat who deigns to share the bed. May your courage and kindness, your dependability and wit, knit the ordinary days into something extraordinary.

And when the road gets steep—as roads sometimes do—may you remember that morning on Tower Bridge, the sun on the river, and the feeling you had when you said yes. Keep saying yes. To the small things, the big things, and the thousands of moments in between.

Ladies and gentlemen, please raise your glasses to Emily and Oliver—may your love be steady, your laughter easy, and your adventures many.

To the bride and groom.

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